

Work and Breastfeeding

Continuing to breastfeed when you return to work has many advantages.

- It saves you money.
- Breastfed infants are more protected from infections than formula fed infants.
- Night feedings are quicker and easier than formula feedings.
- Breastfeeding after a busy work day helps you to relax and enjoy some quiet time with your baby.

You will need to decide how you want your baby fed while you are at work. Options include:

- Express milk during your breaks and lunch so your child care provider can feed it to your baby another day.
- Go to your child care site to breastfeed during your breaks. If breastfeeding sessions are more than 2-3 hours apart, the baby may need expressed milk or formula also.
- Breastfeed your baby before and after child care, and on your days off. Have your child care provider give formula to your baby during the day.

Before returning to work:

- Choose child care that supports breastfeeding.
- Talk to your employer about your work schedule.
- Take as long of a maternity leave as you can.
- Teach baby how to suck from a bottle. Give the first bottle to baby when he is 4 to 6 weeks old.
- Have someone else feed your baby the bottle.
- Start storing expressed milk at least 2 weeks before going back to work. Store 2 to 4 ounces per bottle or milk storage bag. Label the milk container with the date collected and the baby's name.

More tips for working and breastfeeding

- Start back to work on a Thursday
- If possible, work only 2-3 days per week for a few weeks.
- Nurse your baby when you first wake up, and again at child care just before you go to work.
- Consider expressing breast milk in the mornings and weekends if expressing at work won't work for you.

Pumping at work: will it work for you?

You don't need to pump if:

- Baby can go to work with you.
- You are able to breastfeed every 2-3 hours, either by going to the baby or having the baby brought to you.
- You plan to combine breastfeeding with formula feedings.

Consider manual expression or a hand pump if:

- Your schedule rarely keeps you away from baby over 3 hours.
- You need to pump only 1 time per day.

Choose the right electric pump:

- Mini-electric or battery operated pumps are inexpensive and portable. They are not as efficient as full size electric pumps. They usually pump one breast at a time, taking 30 minutes to pump both sides.
- Medical grade electric pumps can be rented or purchased. Both breasts can be pumped at the same time with expression taking 10-15 minutes.

Back-to-work timetable

10-14 days before:

- Begin to introduce a bottle occasionally
- Visit your child care provider
- Think about work clothes that have easy access for pumping.

7-10 days before:

- Leave baby with sitter for short times.
- Make an emergency plan for leaving work or school if baby gets sick.
- If you are not going to pump at work, begin dropping feedings at this time.

Night before:

- Pack the diaper bag, lunch, healthy snacks for yourself, your pump, and milk storage equipment.
- Plan supper for tomorrow night and decide with your partner who will cook it.

First morning:

- Allow 30-60 minutes extra for dressing, feeding baby and packing up two people.

Every morning:

- Allow enough time to nurse the baby before you leave.
- Start supper or start to defrost it in the refrigerator.

When you come home:

- Sit down and relax with your baby!

